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Brent Magouirk

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EXAMINER

LOFTIS, JOHNNA RONEE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

NOTIFICATION DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/30/2008

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

USPTO@hershkovitz.net
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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/052,577	Applicant(s) MAGUIRK ET AL.	
	Examiner JOHNNA R. LOFTIS	Art Unit 3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 April 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a non-final office action upon examination of application number 10/052577. Claims 1-23 are pending and have been examined on the merits discussed below.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims rejected by Geerlings have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. Stack has been introduced. Stack teaches analyzing past customer purchases along with a potential customer's selection of goods and/or service. The two types of data are used to provide recommendations. Claim rejections are updated below.

3. In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., specifics of claimed client ticket sessions) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Further, the claim language is examined using the broadest reasonable interpretation. Examiner contends that the tracking of purchasing history of Stack reads on the client ticket session since both are a way to track the actions of the customer. It is well understood that a ticket session is some recording of transaction data between two parties. In the instant case, the tracking in Stack reads on the ticket session since customer purchase activities are tracked in order to facilitate the recommended action determination.

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4. Further, in light of recent Supreme Court precedent and recent Federal Circuit decisions, new rejections under 35 USC 101 are warranted. These rejections are listed below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

5. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

6. Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 based on Supreme Court precedent and recent Federal Circuit decisions. The Office's guidance to examiners is that a § 101 process must (1) be tied to another statutory class (such as a particular apparatus) or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing. *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); *Parker v. Flook*, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); *Cochrane v. Deener*, 94 U.S. 780, 787-88 (1876).

3. An example of a method claim that would not qualify as a statutory process would be a claim that recited purely mental steps. Thus, to qualify as a § 101 statutory process, the claim should positively recite the other statutory class (the thing or product) to which it is tied, for example by identifying the apparatus that accomplishes the method steps, or positively recite the subject matter that is being transformed, for example by identifying the material that is being changed to a different state.

Here, applicant's method steps fail the first prong of the new Federal Circuit decision since they are not tied to another statutory class and can be performed without the use of a particular apparatus. Thus, claims 1-19 are non-statutory since they may be performed within the human mind.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. **Claims 1-8, 11-15 and 21** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stack, US6782370, in view of Geerlings, US 5956693.

As per **claim 1**, Stack teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions with a plurality of previous customers including at least one non-purchaser (column 1, lines 43-67 – collection of potential customer interest in a good and/or service and also collection of previous customer purchasing history); developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a current customer based on results of the statistical analysis (column 1, lines 43-67 and column 2, lines 32-67 – interest data and purchasing data are analyzed to produce recommendations); wherein at least one of said at least one non-purchaser is other than said current customer and past purchasers (column 1, lines 43-67 – collection of potential customer interest in a good and/or service and also collection of previous customer purchasing history). While Stack teaches generating recommendations, the reference fails to explicitly teach automatically updating an electronic schedule with at least one task representing the at least one recommended action item. Geerlings teaches this feature (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for

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desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the scheduling of communications regarding the recommendations as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 2**, Stack doesn't explicitly teach developing more than one recommended action item and automatically updating the electronic schedule with more than one task, wherein the electronic schedule is updated with a task that corresponds to each of the recommended action items. However, Geerlings teaches developing more than one recommended action item (column 5, lines 32-35 – the merchant schedules transmitting communications on recurring basis and column 6, lines 40-42 – reference is made to sending different communications to the same customer); and automatically updating the electronic schedule with more than one task, wherein the electronic schedule is updated with a task that corresponds to each of the recommended action items (column 5, lines 32-35 – the merchant schedules transmitting communications on recurring basis). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 3**, Stack teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions with a plurality of previous customers that include at least one purchaser and at least one-non purchaser (column 3, lines 50-65 – confidence matching factor is calculated to determine recommendations).

As per **claim 4**, Stack teaches developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a current customer based on at least one rule that is applied to the collection of data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous customers (column 3, lines 50-65 – confidence matching factor is calculated to determine recommendations).

As per **claim 5**, Stack does not explicitly teach the limitations. However, Geerlings teaches developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a specific current customer based on a determination that the collection of data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous customer shows that the specific current customer has not been contacted for a predetermined amount of time (column 5, lines 14-19 – the system analyzes how long ago a customer purchased a product in order to plan communication; if it has been more than 60 days since the purchase, communication is planned). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 6**, Stack teaches determining at least one pattern demonstrated by a group of the plurality of previous customers (column 3, lines 50-65).

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As per **claim 7**, Stack teaches determining trends (column 3, lines 50-65), but does not teach the exact limitations of the claim. Geerlings teaches determining at least one trend based on environmental data characteristics (column 5, lines 6-9 – any combination of criteria based on age, gender, geographical location, shopping activity may be used to target the customer). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 8**, Stack teaches determining trends (column 3, lines 50-65), but does not teach the exact limitations of the claim. Geerlings teaches determining at least one trend based on an environmental data characteristic selected from the group consisting of product type, product cost, customer target cost, customer gender, customer age, salesperson's gender, the weather and salesperson's age (column 5, lines 6-9 – any combination of criteria based on age, gender, geographical location, shopping activity may be used to target the customer). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 11**, Stack teaches making recommendations (column 3 and column 4), But does not teach selecting an appropriate task type. Geerlings teaches determining the

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recommended action item includes selecting an appropriate task type (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent, rules for sending offers are based on the product purchased, i.e., if a customer purchases a certain appliance and extended warranty offer is sent to the customer). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 12**, Stack teaches making recommendations (column 3 and column 4), But does not teach selecting an appropriate task type. Geerlings teaches determining the recommended action item includes selecting an appropriate task type selected from the group consisting of sending flowers, send an email, contacting by telephone, sending a gift, sending a newsletter and sending a gift certificate (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent, rules for sending offers are based on the product purchased, i.e., if a customer purchases a certain appliance and extended warranty offer is sent to the customer). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the

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claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 13**, Stack teaches making recommendations based on interest and shopping history, but does not explicitly teach the features recited in the claims. Geerlings teaches the recommended action item includes selecting a timing and frequency for the at least one task (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 14**, Stack teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions between a single sales entity and a plurality of previous customers (column 3 – column 4 - historical purchases are analyzed using confidence match factor))

As per **claim 15**, Stack teaches statistically analyzing data representing historical interactions, but does not explicitly teach the limitations of the claim. Geerlings teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions between a plurality of sales entities and a plurality of previous customers (column 16, lines 13-34 – different

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branches, departments and/or sites of the company utilize the system as though they are separate merchants). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the recommendation system of Stack the above recited features as taught by Geerlings since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per **claim 21**, Stack teaches data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous customers including at least one non-purchaser are client ticket sessions (column 3, column 4, customer purchase data is collected and retrieved for purposes of recommending items).

9. **Claims 9 and 10** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geerlings, US 5,956,693.

As per **claim 9**, Stack, in combination of Geerlings, teaches scheduling desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent based on the product purchased (Geerlings, column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5), but does not explicitly teach automatically rescheduling the task if it is not performed as scheduled. Geerlings however teaches generating trigger statements wherein a criterion is set that triggers an action, i.e., send a communication after a predetermined amount of time. In view of the triggers in Geerlings, official notice is taken that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to generate a trigger wherein if a communication is not sent as scheduled, i.e., network error, the communication is rescheduled to

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be sent. This would ensure communications to customers are sent regardless of any glitch in the system.

As per **claim 10**, Stack, in combination with Geerlings, teaches scheduling desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent based on the product purchased (Geerlings, column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5) but does not explicitly teach automatically re-assigning the task if it is not performed as scheduled. Geerlings however teaches generating trigger statements wherein a criterion is set that triggers an action, i.e., send a communication after a predetermined amount of time. In view of the triggers in Geerlings, official notice is taken that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to generate a trigger wherein if a communication is not sent as scheduled, i.e., network error, the communication is rescheduled to be sent. This would ensure communications to customers are sent regardless of any glitch in the system.

10. **Claim 16** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geerlings, US 5,956,693, further in view of Kramer et al, US 6,327,574.

As per **claim 16**, the combination of Stack and Geerlings does not explicitly teach statistically analyzing a collection of data that has been stripped of client confidential information and represents historical interactions between a plurality of sales entities and a plurality of previous customers. However, Kramer et al teaches removing confidential consumer information while still allowing targeted marketing to take place. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the removal of

confidential consumer information, as a way to ensure customer information will not end up in the wrong hands.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

11. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

12. **Claims 17-20, 22 and 23** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a and e) as being anticipated by Stack, US 6782370.

As per **claim 17**, Stack teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions with a plurality of previous customers including at least one non-purchaser (column 1, lines 43-67 – collection of potential customer interest in a good and/or service and also collection of previous customer purchasing history); developing at least one recommended

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action item to be taken with respect to a current customer based on results of the statistical analysis (column 1, lines 43-67 and column 2, lines 32-67 – interest data and purchasing data are analyzed to produce recommendations); performing a task that corresponds to the at least one recommended action item (column 3 – column 4 – books are recommended); wherein at least one of said at least one non-purchaser is other than said current customer and past purchasers (column 1, lines 43-67 – collection of potential customer interest in a good and/or service and also collection of previous customer purchasing history).

As per **claim 18**, Stack teaches performing the task in response to a user directive (column 3, column 4 – recommendation in response to user actions).

As per **claim 19**, Stack teaches automatically performing the task (column 3 – 14-28 – once a user selects a book, the system automatically makes recommendations based on selection).

As per **claim 20**, it is the system with means for performing the method of claim 17. Since Geerlings teaches a computer system wherein customer data is analyzed to develop a plan for targeted communication the same rejection as applied to claim 17 is applied to claim 20.

As per **claim 22**, Stack teaches data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous customers including at least one non-purchaser are client ticket sessions (column 3, column 4, customer purchase data is collected and retrieved for purposes of recommending items).

As per **claim 23**, Stack teaches data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous customers including at least one non-purchaser are client ticket sessions (column 3,

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column 4, customer purchase data is collected and retrieved for purposes of recommending items).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOHNNA R. LOFTIS whose telephone number is (571)272-6736. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Beth Van Doren can be reached on 571-272-6737. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/jl/

7/13/08

/Jonathan G. Sterrett/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623